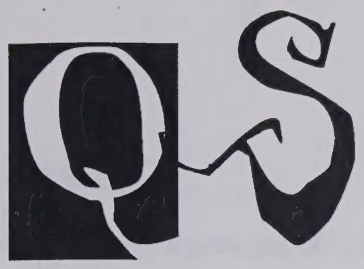

queeringthesouth

a gathering of lgbt activists, academics and artists

What does it mean to be queer in the South? Is it contradictory to be both queer and southern? Is the South itself "queer," that is, the nation's "other"? How do power and privilege shape definitions of "southern" and "queer"?

This three-day gathering seeks to explore how sexuality, race, religion, region, class and gender shape our relationship to the South and "southern" identity. It will incorporate both reflection and action, thus encouraging a variety of voices. We will begin the gathering with the analysis of our past and present experiences as bisexuals, lesbians, gays, and transgendered persons in the South and then move into workshops and panels which offer "how to's" for organizing, coalition building and creating practical strategies for challenging the various institutions and practices which threaten us as individuals and as communities. This gathering will be held June 25-27, the three days before Atlanta Pride Weekend.

Possible topics might include:

The Illegal South: Queers and the Law; God, Queers, and the South; Queer Southern Drag Cultures; Queering Southern History: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Lives; Queer Literary Traditions; Challenging Intolerance and Ignorance: Anti-Racism, Anti-Sexism, Anti-Classism; Using Our Own and the Mainstream Press; Neo-Confederates and Queers; Challenging Heterosexism Within Institutions; Successfully Organizing in Rural Areas; Jethro and Miss Jane: Queer Southerners and Popular Culture; The South and Queer Sexual Practices; Queer Southern Subcultures; Queers and Southern Stereotypes: How are We Related to Myths and Stereotypes about the South?

Panel, workshop and paper proposals will be chosen based on how directly they focus on the general questions around which this conference is framed. We are looking for proposals that are historically situated, attentive to the specifics of race, class and gender, and are presented in a language accessible to a wide audience. Additionally, workshop proposals will be chosen for how clearly they are conceptualized,including plans for audience participation. Financial assistance may be available, including reduced rate housing, free housing, and registration fee waivers.

Send your 1-2 page abstract by February 3, 1997 to **Queering the South, P.O. Box 15470, Atlanta, GA 30333, or qtsmail@learnlink.emory.edu**

TO: Vera Rorie, Director
Office of Multicultural Affairs

FROM: Organizers of *Queering the South:* a gathering of l.g.b.t. activists, academics and artists

DATE: Nov. 25, 1996

RE: Funding request for Emory conference

We, the organizing group for *Queering the South*, would like to request funding from the Office of Multicultural Affairs for a conference to be held at Emory, June 25th-27th, 199." *Queering the South* will be a ground-breaking event -- the first queer studies conference to consider the ways living within southern cultures affects the representations, experiences, and identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. We are creating a conference which will encourage research attentive to social, historical, and economic contexts as well as to regional differences, in order to address the well-documented trend in Queer Studies toward models of experience which are not materially or socially grounded and often generalize from East and West Coast Urban experiences. By focusing this gathering around reflection *and* action, we hope it can help narrow the gap between queer academics, activists, artists and cultural workers in this region. For these reasons, *Queering the South* will be unique, providing a model for future queer studies conferences. Because of the enthusiasm which has already been expressed for our vision of this gathering, we feel certain that *Queering the South* will attract several hundred scholars, artists and cultural workers from the southeast and across the country.

Our relationship with the Atlanta Pride Committee (A.P.C.), which is co-sponsoring this gathering, will encourage a more diverse group of participants than similar conferences usually attract. A.P.C. has long wanted to enrich the cultural, political and educational components of Pride weekend, and is very enthusiastic about working with us. This relationship allows us to hold this gathering the three days before Atlanta Pride '97 weekend -- June 25th-27th. It will also allow us to draw upon A.P.C.'s expertise in networking and fundraising, as well as their extensive volunteer base. We will be listed as a 'Pride-related' event in all their publicity, which is distributed through the southeast.

T he Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Life is also co-sponsoring our efforts, providing us a much-needed 'home-base' at Emory. The director, Saralyn Chesnut, has committed the Office's resources in terms of space and infrastructure support, part-time labor, and funding of the mailing costs for our 'call for proposals' and registration materials. In addition, because we are able to "house" the gathering at Emory, we will be able to offer low-cost dormitory housing to those who otherwise might not be able to attend, as well as have access to inexpensive classroom/auditorium space.

We feel that Emory is an ideal host for "Queering the South," because it serves as a center for

Southern Studies, and is rapidly becoming a center of Queer Studies. As the President's Commission on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns explores the possibility of instituting a program in this field, the number of undergraduate and graduate courses in Queer Studies grows each year, attracting high enrollments and great student interest. Several members of Emory's faculty specialize in Queer Studies, and a significant number of graduate students are pursuing research in this field. Apart from out-of-town visitors who will be attending the conference, there are also about 4,000 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at Emory during the summer, all of whom can benefit from Emory's sponsorship of this event.

Attached you will find a budget for the conference. We have applied fox grants from national and regional gay and lesbian organizations, but as they usually fund grassroots political organizations, we do not expect to receive very much from them. We have, however, received commitments of funding from the Institute of Liberal Arts, the President's Commission on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Concerns, Sacred Worth, and 'support in kind' from the Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life and the Atlanta Pride Committee. We are now seeking funding from other Emory departments and programs (including Women's Studies, History, Creative Writing, Art History, Religion, Candler School of Theology, the Women's Center, the Center for the Study of Language, Literature and Culture, the Graduate Student Council, and the College Council), as well as developing local fundraising projects.

The largest costs in hosting this conference will be those involving our keynote and plenary speakers, including housing, airfare, and honoraria. . For keynote speakers we are approaching Dorothy Allison and Pat Hussain, and we have a number of other activists, artists and cultural workers to whom we would like to offer subsidies (including but not limited to Randall Keenan, Mab Segrest, Shay Youngblood, Mandy Carter, John D'Emilio and Jim Grimsley) so that they might sit on plenaries focused on queer issues in the South specific to their work. Any support that you might offer towards our efforts --either for speakers or infrastructure costs -- would be greatly appreciated, and we would of course list the Office of Multicultural Affairs as a co-sponsor in all publication materials. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Donna J. Smith,
Queering the South working group
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